X 794 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling
776 (much as "mizē" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more
● [674] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

X 794 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called
755 "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally
X 794 broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after
755 member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to
535 perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

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symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances.

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes.

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shĭftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shĭftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security.

The term *shĭftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male competence. This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

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*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lījj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lījj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abāt̄*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[15] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier [865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights, [576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception.* With straight face and convincing 181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves 571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for 577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn [123]